

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1    1.    A method of facilitating person-to-person commerce over the Internet, the method  
2       comprising the steps of:  
3       harvesting images from a plurality of sites based upon user-supplied information,  
4               the user-supplied information including descriptions of items for sale and  
5               locations from which images to be associated with the items can be  
6               retrieved;  
7       creating thumbnail images corresponding to the harvested images; and  
8       aggregating the thumbnail images onto a web page for presentation at a remote site.
- 1    2.    The method of claim 1, wherein the step of creating thumbnail images  
2       corresponding to the harvested images comprises the steps of:  
3       for each harvested image  
4               decompressing the harvested image from a source format to a decompressed  
5               image format;  
6               converting the decompressed image format to a thumbnail image format; and  
7               compressing the thumbnail image format into an output format.
- 1    3.    The method of claim 2, wherein the source format comprises one of the following  
2       image formats: TIFF, JPEG, AVI, JFIF, PNG, BMP, PBM, PGM, PPM, PSD,  
3       XBM, XPM, WPG, PICT.
- 1    4.    The method of claim 2, wherein the output format comprises one of the following  
2       image formats: TIFF, JPEG, AVI, JFIF, PNG, BMP, PBM, PGM, PPM, PSD,  
3       XBM, XPM, WPG, PICT.

1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the locations comprise Uniform Resource Locators  
2 (URLs), and wherein the step of harvesting images from a plurality of sites based  
3 upon user-supplied information comprises the step of downloading the images from  
4 the plurality of sites specified by the URLs.

1 6. A method of displaying items in an person-to-person online trading environment,  
2 the method comprising the steps of:  
3 storing at a local site a first thumbnail image associated with a first item for sale, the  
4 first thumbnail image created based on a first image at a first remote site;  
5 storing at the local site a second thumbnail image associated with a second item for  
6 sale, the second thumbnail image created based upon a second image at a  
7 second remote site; and  
8 combining the first and second thumbnail images onto a web page for presentation  
9 at a third remote site.

1 7. The method of claim 6, further comprising the step of harvesting the first and  
2 second images from the first and second remote sites, respectively, based upon  
3 user-supplied information including Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) from  
4 which the first and second images can be retrieved.

1 8. The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of scaling the first and second  
2 images to fit within a predetermined space.

1 9. A method of accessing a database, the method comprising the steps of:  
2 loading a database comprising a plurality of thumbnail images completely into a  
3 virtual address space of a process starting at a first address; and

4        retrieving a thumbnail image of the plurality of thumbnail images from the database  
5        by indexing into the virtual address space at a location defined by the first  
6        address plus an offset corresponding to the thumbnail image.

1    10.    The method of claim 9, wherein the step of loading a database comprising a  
2        plurality of thumbnail images completely into a virtual address space of a process  
3        starting at a first address comprises opening the database as a memory mapped file.

1    11.    A method of generating HyperText Markup Language (HTML), the method  
2        comprising the steps of:  
3        accessing a data store having data for display, the data including information  
4        associated with an item including an item number; and  
5        generating HTML including a reference to an image associated with the item, the  
6        reference based upon the item number and an image format associated with  
7        the image.

1    12.    The method of claim 11, wherein the reference comprises an inline image tag, and  
2        wherein the step of generating HyperText Markup Language (HTML) including a  
3        reference to an image associated with the item comprises specifying the SRC  
4        attribute of the inline image tag in the form <path><item number>.<image  
5        extension>, where <image extension> comprises a three or four character extension  
6        corresponding to the image format.

1    13.    The method of claim 11, wherein the reference is in a form other than a query.

1    14.    The method of claim 11, wherein the image is stored in a database that is accessed  
2        as a memory mapped file.

1 15. A method of displaying items, the method comprising the steps of:  
2 storing in a database a first thumbnail image associated with a first item for sale, the  
3 first thumbnail image created based on a first user-specified image at a first  
4 remote site;  
5 storing in the database a second thumbnail image associated with a second item for  
6 sale, the second thumbnail image created based upon a second user-  
7 specified image at a second remote site; and  
8 responsive to a query, combining the first and second thumbnail images onto a web  
9 page for presentation at a client from which the query originated.

1 16. A method of displaying items in an person-to-person online trading environment,  
2 the method comprising the steps of:  
3 creating a first thumbnail image associated with a first item for sale, the first  
4 thumbnail image based on a first image at a first remote site;  
5 creating a second thumbnail image associated with a second item for sale, the  
6 second thumbnail image based on a second image at a second remote site;  
7 and  
8 responsive to a user query, combining the first and second thumbnail images onto a  
9 web page for presentation at a client from which the user query originated.

1 17. The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of updating the first thumbnail  
2 image.

1 18. In an online commerce environment, a method of allowing a user to preview a  
2 plurality of items for sale, the method comprising the steps of:  
3 receiving a query; and

- 4 causing a plurality of thumbnail images corresponding to items that satisfy the user
- 5 query to be displayed, each of the thumbnail images created based upon a
- 6 user-specified image.